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# Cultural differences and effects of culture shock on communication management.

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation was written as part of the MSc in Management at the International Hellenic University.

The dissertation discusses about the cultural differences between people, mainly in a business environment. To understand it, the work of different anthropologist is analyzed. The consequences as culture shock are highlighted to have a better understanding of the situation and recommendations are also made. Also, the role of manager is primary when talking about cultural differences at work. Conclusions are made through the dissertation to help the future or current managers to deal with cultural dilemma or problems.

A survey on a sample of 100 persons who work in a multicultural work place was also made to acquire a better overview of the potential discrimination that employees are facing and have a better understanding of the theory discussed previously.

I want to thank my supervisors, Ms. Kleopatra Konstantoulaki and Ms. Stavroula Laspita for their patience and support in overcoming numerous obstacles I have been facing, for the constructive criticism and friendly advices. I would like to express my very great appreciation to all the persons who helped me by answering my survey. I am also using this opportunity to express my gratitude to everyone who supported me throughout this dissertation, my best friends, family and colleagues who were encouraging me and helping me during these past months. And most importantly, none of this could have happened without my dad who is always supportive, helpful and who always encouraged me throughout my study.

Keywords: Culture, difference, shock, management, communication

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## Introduction

Companies are employing more and more employees from different countries, which means that, at one point, people with different cultures will have to work together and adapt themselves to work in harmony and avoid potential conflicts. The same person can belong to many different cultures depending on many factors as the birthplace; nationality; ethnicity; family status; gender; age; language; education; physical condition; sexual orientation; religion; profession; ... Cultural differences can be a strength for companies as well as a weakness, depending on how the managers deal with it and the way they will treat the different employees.

The Dutch researcher, Geert Hofstede defined culture as *the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another*. (Hofstede, Culture and organizations: Software of the mind, 1991) In his work, Geert Hofstede also defined management as (...) *in its broadest sense consists in the co-ordination of the efforts of people and the use of economical and technical resources in order to obtain desired ends. (...) it implies dealing with people (...) and with non-human resources (...), as well as with the interaction between these two*. (Hofstede, 1984) The management skill is culturally specific, a technique which is applying for one culture might not be appropriate for another one, it must be adapted.

Many anthropologists have been using frameworks to understand how culture works and why the differences between them can be strong. Nevertheless, the literature gap concerning how to deal with many different culture in a business environment is remaining. By solving this, it will also be easier to understand how cultural diversity, distance and foreignness create a positive value for global organizations. The purpose of this thesis is to understand how, in a business environment, we can deal with employees who have different cultural backgrounds. To understand properly how it works. This dissertation will also show what are the different kind of cultural differences that employees can face while working in a foreign environment.

For the purpose of this work, data was collected by means of a questionnaire focused on a sample of 100 employees whom are working abroad or with people from a different country. The findings of this questionnaire were analyzed and used to have some examples and specific cases to support this work. This question form helps to understand the theories from the scientists and also, how the different cultures feels integrated or rejected within an international environment.

A lot of research have been made to understand how individuals are building their own culture. Some anthropologist assume that it is built during the early childhood, at home and at school; others say that it is still changing while being an adult. The environment we live in is affecting everyone, the traditions and culture we will grow up with will create our personality and our beliefs. We need to understand better how, with our own culture, we can adapt our self into another, what are the factors which will help the process or will affect it. As a manager dealing with different people, what kind of

knowledge do they need to have to accomplish their job in harmony and avoiding conflicts. Some theories classified cultures into some categories; nowadays, the world is evolving faster than before, and more categories are appearing. Few cultures are getting closer to others, and some are starting to become different due to political, religious, financial, environmental and many other matters.

In some part of the world, it becomes more and more popular to move abroad to work and get a better pay, to discover a new culture/country, to have a better quality of life or for other reasons. While moving, many psychological and physical symptoms known as culture shock can appear. Culture shock is a term used by many people but not well understood as a medical matter. More studies should be made to find a way to avoid this situation and, in a business environment, have a psychological support for those people who might have to face it while moving abroad.

The research purpose of this study is also to aware managers working in multinationals of the cultural differences, their advantages and disadvantages. Along with that, they should take the benefits of the advantages and understand which skill they need to turn the disadvantages of the cultural differences into advantages. The way they perceive cultural differences will affect all the team and even the company itself. As a leader, the manager must be tolerant and follow the best cultural management strategies to lead the team in an effective way.

## Literature review

*Culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or society from those of another. Culture consist of the patterns of thinking that parents transfer to their children, teachers to their students, friends to their friends, leaders to their followers, and followers to their leaders. (Hofstede, 1984)*

As a model to support this work, the use of three different frameworks will help to analyze and understand how cultural differences works, what are the criteria and how a manager can avoid or solve a potential cultural mistake. The first framework which will be used through this dissertation is *"tightness or looseness"*. It is also related to other important features, such as personality structure or types of deviant behavior (Pelto, 1968). The "Tight" societies are described as those that are rigorously formal and disciplined, they have clearly defined norms and impose severe sanctions on individuals who deviate from norms. Contrary to the "Loose" societies which are described as those that has a lack of formality, regimentation and discipline. The norms are expressed through a wide variety of alternative channels and it has a high tolerance for deviant behavior (Aktas, Mert; et al., 2016). Anthropological descriptions of tight and loose societies usually focus on the quality of relationships between the individual and his society. People in tight societies are sometimes labeled as docile and conforming, though other anthropologists have stressed personal security and cultural integration in such settings. In loose societies, on the other hand, personality characteristics of individualism and self-sufficiency seem to be prominent (Pelto, 1968).

From the tightness and looseness dimension, by analyzing an ecological factor, Hofstede identified the four dimensions of cultural variation which are individualism-collectivism, masculinity-femininity, power-distance and uncertainty avoidance (Chan, 1996). The psychologist Geert Hofstede build a scale which evaluate each dimension by scoring the countries from 0 to 100 to understand the cultural differences, as it can be a barrier to communication. It can also affect the ability to build a connection with the others or a misunderstanding with the values of a company, which can easily demotivate the workers. Hofstede's dimensions is used as a starting point to evaluate an approach, take decisions or actions based on a general sense of how people in a particular society might think and react. It also helps managers to work effectively with people from different cultures and geographic backgrounds. (Hofstede, s.d.)

Another useful framework which can be used to understand the importance of cultural differences is from Edward T. Hall. The anthropologist founded the field of intercultural communication in 1959 with his famous book *The silent language*. For approaching intercultural communication, he is using the high-context and low-context cultures which refer on indirect and direct communication. For example, in high context cultures, people prefer informal agreements over meticulously worded legal documents. They listen to "what is not said" in the body language, silences and pauses. Conversely, in low-context cultures, they prefer sending and receiving accurate messages directly and



being precise on the written and spoken words. (Neese, 2016) In his work, Edward T. Hall also explains the five keys topics (time, space, material possessions, friendship patterns and business agreements) which can help a company to acquire the understanding necessary to do business in foreign countries. Besides this, after comparing different nations, the conclusion of his work is that not only the person will have to be well versed in the economics, law and politics of the foreign country or culture, but he will have to understand, if not speak, the silent languages of the other cultures (Hall).

Culture shock tends to be a disease which mainly appears to people who have been suddenly moved abroad. The anthropologist Dr. Kalervo Oberg was the first to mention the term Culture Shock in his literature in 1960. In his article, Oberg defined it as follows: *Culture Shock is precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse. These signs or cues include the thousand and one ways in which we orient ourselves to the situations of daily life* (Oberg, 1960). As Oberg states, these cues might be words, gestures, facial expressions, customs or norms as already mentioned in the frameworks. While growing up, all of us are taking part of a culture, it can be in the language we speak or the beliefs we accept. But when entering in another culture or country, most of our familiar cues are removed which can be followed by a feeling of anxiety and frustration when we have to face a new culture. Following Dr. Oberg's theory, people react to the frustration in much the same way and through different phases as reject or regression which will be explained in this dissertation.

Many scientists also dealt with the phenomenon of Culture Shock and even if they all found their own definitions of the concept, most of them stick very closely to the one Oberg gave in 1960. For example, as we already analyzed his framework, Hofstede states that Culture Shock is a *"state of distress following the transfer of a person to an unfamiliar cultural environment"* (Hofstede, 1984), which may also be accompanied by various physical symptoms. The different definitions have in common that they see the culture shock as an unpleasant reaction which occurs while you must face a foreign culture.

## 1. Culture

*Management of cultural differences* is the activity of directing and managing the attitudes and behaviours of employees from different cultures in line with the organizational strategies rather than melting them away in organizational settings. Culture has an important place in people's life, it impacts them privately and professionally, it's part of a group of people's own way of life. According to Edward Burnett Tylor, *culture is a complex whole of values relating to knowledge, belief, art, ethics and tradition created by humankind as members of their societies*. (Tutar, Altinoz, & Cakiroglu, 2014)

### **A) Effect of culture on individuals**

As Clara O'Dell said, *If you don't give people information, they make up something to fill the void*. If you don't ask or listen carefully what others say, the brain will make up its own interpretation for the different behaviors and beliefs of the people around. This can lead to a misunderstanding of the situation. It's also important to have the knowledge of your own roots and culture before to try to understand another's. Growing up with a specific culture doesn't mean that everything else is not culturally acceptable.

To quote Oberg, *An individual is not born with culture but only with the capacity to learn it and use it. There is nothing in a newborn child which dictates that it should eventually speak Portuguese, English or French nor that he eat with a fork in his left hand rather than in the right, or use chopsticks. All these things the child had to learn*. (Oberg, 1960) Culture isn't inked into your blood, it's something you build and learn as you are growing up. The young person learns to adapt themselves to the physical environment and the people with whom they associate it. This adjustment can be difficult for children or adolescent to experience but once they learned it, the culture becomes a way of life. It becomes familiar and automatic for them as it is "normal" in their culture, that's the way it's supposed to be.

#### **i) Ethnocentrism**

Ethnocentrism is the *belief that a particular race or culture is better than others*. (Cambridge dictionary, s.d.) People usually accept their own culture as the best and the only way of doing things. Any negative comment about their culture is taken as an affront, not only for the individual but also for the group. If you criticize someone's culture or country, you are also criticizing them as well as if you are criticizing someone as an individual, you are criticizing the whole country.

Ethnocentrism is a permanent characteristic of a national group, it's about being proud of where you come from, the culture, beliefs and values of the country. Even if a national is criticizing some aspects of his own culture, the foreigner should listen but not enter into criticism, it might hurt the feelings of the other and create an atmosphere of tension.

Nowadays, the modern nations are complex, they are made of different ethnic groups, stratified into classes, differentiated into regions, separated into rural and urban settlements, which each of them have its distinct cultural characteristics. Which mean that even in a nation, the culture is also divided depending on where you live or who you are. Upon these differences which make each individual different than the other, some elements as the official language, institutions and customs are common and together form a nation of people united together. (Oberg, 1960)

To avoid any unnecessary conflict, the manager shouldn't be offended if a foreign employee give an opinion or ask a question about the national culture; for a new comer, it might be hard to understand all the customs and habits, it doesn't mean that they are criticizing it. As well as in the opposite side, the manager should avoid stereotypes to not offend the foreigner, it's always better to ask questions about a new culture than guessing how they do or repeat what you heard about it.

It will be challenging for a manager to deal with people who are ethnocentric as they might make the wrong assumptions about other people and make premature judgements. To avoid ethnocentrism, the manager can use some simple habits that can help him or the employees to overcome ethnocentrism:

- *Avoid assumptions*: people from different culture have other customs, beliefs, values and traditions, it is important to respect it and not make any presumptions.
- *Learn about other's culture*: the knowledge is the key to understand another culture. Research about the traditions, the lifestyle will help to find out how it works.
- *Avoid judgements*: when the others are acting differently, it doesn't mean that they are making a mistake. It is important to learn to appreciate the differences between cultures without judging them.
- *Always be respectful*: the golden rule is to "Treat people the way you want to be treated".

*The Greek historian, Herodotus, was one of the first to say that all humans are ethnocentric, believing their own societies to be better than others. By understanding why cultures develop the way they do, it is much easier to understand and appreciate cultural differences, which is critical in a world of increasing global opportunities and global threats. (Gelfand & J., 2012)*

A company might also be perceived as ethnocentric. In this case, they will consider the cultural differences to be negative and suggest to minimize them. (Tutar, Altinoz, & Cakiroglu, 2014) An ethnocentric company working together with employees from different cultural and demographic backgrounds might have a negative impact and cause problems as they only see their way to work as the only one acceptable.

## ***B) Effect of culture on teams***

In a multicultural organization, culture can have an important impact on everyone as an individual as mentioned previously but it can also affect a group of people. Ignoring cultural differences has negative consequences on teams, it will only drive the colleagues apart from each other, cause tension and conflicts or even create small groups of people with similar cultures while rejecting the others. An ineffective management will have serious impact on the quality of work but also on the quality of life of the employees.

An example viewed in the survey made for this dissertation is the differences in timing, working tempo, timetable,... The way to see the time or punctuality can be very different depending on the culture. One of the respondent, a manager, said: *The main difference for me was the timetable. For example, when I plan a meeting at 10am, it is acceptable for me to be at that meeting between 10 and 10:05 am. For Germans, you have to be there at 9:45 am. For Indians, it is more like 10:15 am. I had to juggle with all of this cultural difference in order to balance our difference.* (Dieudonné, 2018) This kind of cultural difference can affect the team and the work as every culture has its own point of view on the timing. Some will have to wait, others will be late,... Daily, this kind of difference has to be fixed by imposing a unique rule to everybody to avoid conflict and frustration. The work ethic from one culture to another can change radically. Some employees, depending on their culture will perceive the work in a different way and take it more or less serious than others. Also, the behavior during the meeting can differ, as the approach to the guideline or orders. These are some of the findings from the survey which have a negative effect on teams.

The effect of culture on teams can also be positive. As mentioned previously, companies and employees should avoid working in an ethnocentric way, a synergic approach is the best one. Cultural synergy means *blending differences together to create more effective activities and systems*. The synergic approach is about the ability to notice cultural differences as well as similarities and to turn them into a competitive edge for the team and the company. This approach bring everybody together, it has a positive contribution as it recognizing both positive and negative aspects of cultural differentiation. It prefers to develop a strategy which will benefits the positive aspects and minimize the negative ones. (Tutar, Altinoz, & Cakiroglu, 2014) By working together and understanding each others' difference, strengts and weaknesses, they can have a very complementary business relations for the team.

## 2. Cultural differences

*Cultural difference is a structure that arises from the mixture of people with different group identities within the same social system. (Tutar, Altinoz, & Cakiroglu, 2014) Geert Hofstede said that culture is reflected in the meanings people attach to various aspects of life ; their way of looking at the world and their role in it ; in their values, that is, in what they consider as « good » and as « evil » ; in their collective beliefs, what they consider as « true » and as « false » ; in their artistic expressions, what they consider as « beautiful » and as « ugly ».* (Hofstede, Cultural dimensions in Management and planning, 1984)

Many scientists defined and explained the cultural differences through different frameworks or dimensions. To deal with cultural differences, the key is to understand what the differences between you and the others in term of culture can be. From this understanding, it's important to know how to react. Pelto's, Hofstede's and Edward Hall's work will help to understand in which category your culture and the other's culture stand. This doesn't mean that everybody from a culture or society is programmed in the same way or are the same, obviously there are similarities between culture, but people's mind is also programmed differently depending on the life experience and other factors.

### **A) Pelto's framework**

Pelto showed that the traditional societies vary widely in their adherence of social norms, people within the same nation generally share the same perceptions. For example, tight societies have strong and defined norms, a low tolerance for deviant behaviors, they are formal and disciplined. They can impose severe sanctions on individuals who appears to have deviated norms or behaviors. Oppositely, loose societies have weak norms and a high tolerance for people with deviant behaviors.

It can be a challenge for managers to deal with those two types of societies as one will judge and strongly disapprove misbehaviors and the other one will be more tolerant. In tight nations, they are most likely to have autocratic governments, as well as less openness in the media, more police per capita, a strict punishment policy, lower crime rates, etc. compared to loose societies. Even if a society is considered as tight or loose, in certain domains, they can also vary, it doesn't mean that they are always tight or always loose in every domains.

If you are from one type of culture going to another one to work there, the shock can be confusing as one is more tight and the other one is loose. Employees can easily get lost and don't know what is appropriate or inappropriate; in this case, managers have to be careful and strike a balance. Tight and loose societies can be a source of stress; Pelto said *although individuals might assume that looseness is associated with less nervous strain on individuals... it is also possible that tight and loose societies simply produce different kinds of comforts and anxieties in their people.* By understanding how both societies work and what are the factors that relate to tightness and looseness, it can

help to limitate the stress and help people to be less ethnocentric. From one society's point of view, loose one for example, they might view the other one as restrictive. (Gelfand & J., 2012)

### ***B) Hofstede's framework***

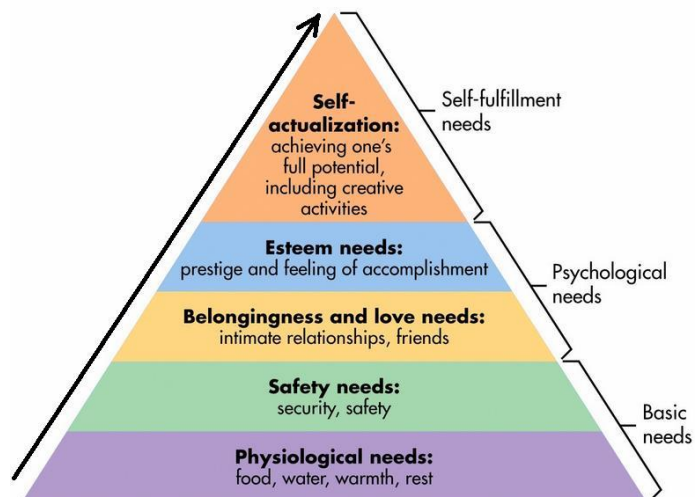
Hofstede's cultural dimensions framework describes the effects of a society's culture on the values of its members. His theory is dividing each of the dimensions in two parts; for him, a culture stands either in one or the other one. He holds that culture is more effective than demographics as far as values and attitudes at an organization are concerned. In this part, some of the characteristics of each dimension will be analyzed. (Tutar, Altinoz, & Cakiroglu, 2014)

#### **i) Individualism vs collectivism**

This framework relates to people's self-concept of either "I" or "we", what is the more important for them. Individuals prefer to take care of themselves and their immediate family member only. Oppositely, the collectivists will rather be loyal to their relatives, look after them and think about their clan before to think about themselves. Hofstede showed that in less economically developed countries, people are more collective. In the opposite, in more economically developed countries, people are more individualist. This gap will have some impacts for the managers who have to deal with individualism and collectivism.

One of the implication is the self-interest versus group-interest; in individualist cultures, they tend to be motivated by the self-interest, meaning that the money they earn is theirs and they might not necessarily share it with their relatives, self-interest is the ultimate motive. In Collectivist culture, they are motivated by group interests (family, clan or other type of in-group), employees will not spend their earnings themselves, but they are more willing to share it with needy relatives. Communication between these two types of culture might be hard as they might not understand each other's motivation and the economic behavior in each other's society.

Every human has different needs, Abraham Maslow categorized them into a pyramid. As the picture describes, the needs are following a hierarchy, the psychological needs are in the lowest level followed by safety needs, belongingness, esteem (which include self-esteem as well as esteem for the others) and finally self-actualization which is placed at the highest level. Workers have to be motivated by the lower needs and satisfied them self-actualization which means that the realized their full potential at work. Indeed, as a



Picture 1: Maslow's pyramid of needs

supreme need, individualist cultures will want to achieve the self-actualization need. Oppositely, in collectivist cultures, the supreme need might be for actualizing their in-group as keeping harmony with others or even self-effacement. Depending on the culture, the hierarchy of Maslow's pyramid can slightly change depending if it's a collectivist or individualist culture.

As well, individualist cultures have usually a business relationship with their employer, it is based on mutual advantage and business related. In collectivist cultures, the relationship between employer and employee is different, the employer will protect the employee and in exchange, he will be loyal to him, manager and employees are closer to each other. (Hofstede, 1984)

#### ii) Large vs small power distance

Power distance means that the members of a culture or a society accept that power in organizations is distributed unequally. The culture in a large power distance accept a hierarchical order, everybody has its place in the organization and follow the hierarchy. Oppositely, the members of small power distance prefer equality than hierarchy. The power distance scale is about the stress on power between the managers and the managed.

Culture with low power distance are considering the status' differences as undesirable, in high power distance culture, superior and subordinates have a visible difference in the status. For low power distance, the status is based on what they achieved, the personal merit and what has been done from them. In high power distance society, the status is acquiring based on rank, the ancestry of the employee, the wealth, ... The main difference between is, one is about what you do and how well you do it and the other one would privilege you depending on who you are.

As mentioned previously, the ancestry and the respect for old age is very common for high power distance societies. It implies respect for the older person in the organization or even in the personal life. In small power distance, the age is not valued in the same way, it tends to be negatively evaluated as sometimes they are not taken seriously. This can lead to a shock between the two types of societies as they might find a lack of respect or won't understand why they have to treat someone with that much respect if it's a colleague, for example. (Hofstede, 1984)

#### iii) Strong vs weak uncertainty avoidance

This scale is about the society's level of tolerance while they are facing ambiguities. Culture with strong uncertainty avoidance tends to feel uncomfortable while facing ambiguity and uncertainty. Sometimes, they might even be intolerant toward deviant persons and ideas, they like to follow codes and rules. Culture with weak uncertainty avoidance will be more relaxed and tolerant towards deviances.

For example, in high level of uncertainty of avoidance societies, Law and order is very important, they think they should follow the written and unwritten rules, social codes. They will be satisfied by following the rules that a manager gives them, they need it to feel comfortable. However, in low uncertainty avoidance, they also have written and

non-written rules that they have to respect but they give less importance to them. They also live in a comfortable way if there aren't rules. A manager should give enough rules for the societies who need it, so they can feel comfortable. If they are too strict, the other type of society won't feel comfortable with it as they also like to be free. Finding the middle and be sure that everybody is respecting the basic rules is important to deal with different types of culture.

Another important difference for the manager is the punctuality and how the different societies see it. It can be directly linked with the rules and, for some societies, punctuality comes more naturally than for the others. Being at work on time or earlier is seen as a proof of respect towards the manager and the colleagues. For other societies, being late isn't a big deal and doesn't mean that you are disrespectful. In this case, the manager must be tolerant but at the same time, the rules should be clear and the same for everybody in order to not create any conflicts between employees. (Hofstede, 1984)

#### iv) Masculinity vs Femininity

It describes societies as either enforcing authority, need of achievement and earning money (masculine) or caring more about interpersonal relations, solidarity, modesty, interest in others and stress on quality of life (feminine).

The masculine societies prefer to reward according to the performances of the employees, feminine societies would rather reward the employees regarding to their need. One believes in equity while the other one believes in equality. For example, the career expectation in masculine countries is competitive, they want to have a great career and it's important for them. In feminine countries, the career expectation is different as it doesn't matter as much as for the masculine countries. They don't need to "make a career" to feel good and happy at work.

Another difference that a manager should take into consideration while managing a team is the sex role in the work place. In some countries, men and women have predetermined jobs, especially for women, they can not always choose the job they want as it is considered as a masculine job. The way some person will see the role of man and woman within a company can also create conflicts. According to some societies, the manager should be a man, they have to take important decisions, they are powerful and admired so the ideal picture of the manager is macho and it is seen as a man. Managers working in a multicultural environment have to be careful with this dimension, women shouldn't feel rejected or not qualified for the job by the others as well as a manager can be a girl and it doesn't change the fact that she has the best qualities to lead a team. (Hofstede, 1984)

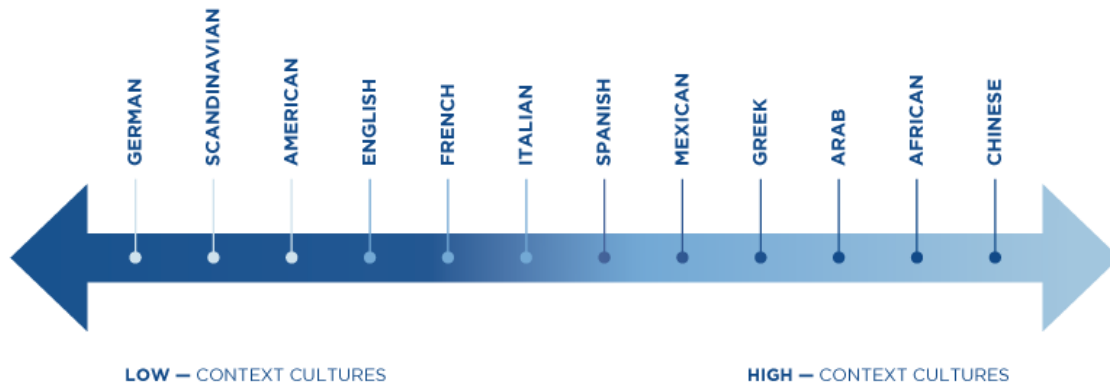
#### ***C) Edward T. Hall's framework***

The anthropologist Edward Hall contributed to the general understanding of culture. He also explained the importance of communication to deal with the cultural differences between people. In the chapter 6 called *Context and meaning* of his book *Beyond Culture*, Edward Hall said *One of the functions of culture is to provide a highly selective*



*screen between man and the outside world. In its many forms, culture therefore designates what we pay attention to and what we ignore.* (Hall E. T., 1976)

His framework of high and low context cultures refer to the value cultures place on direct and indirect communication, *As one move from the low to the high side of the scale, awareness of the selctive process increases.* (Hall E. T., 1976) This high and low context scale below give the example of some cultures and shows where they are placed in the context scale of Hall.



Picture 2: High and Low context culture scale

i) Hight-context cultures

In high context culture, the community will accord more importance on the stimuli surrounding the message and then the message itself. As Edward Hall said, *A high context communication or message is one in which most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message.* (Hall E. T., 1976) What really matters is not what you say but the way you say it, they are more implicit than the low-context cultures. They will need more time to make decisions or, in a business environment, perform transactions. They are more willing to read between the lines than the low-context cultures. In this case, they will use more non-verbal sign while talking.

ii) Low-context cultures

Low context cultures are in the opposite, what really matters is the content of the communication. They are more explicit and need efficiency and accuracy while communicating with other peers, especially while working in a business environment where the communication needs to be specific and direct. They are more work oriented while being at the office, from Hoefstede's work, they would be in the individualistic category. As well, from Pelto point of view, this type of society are more tight than the other.

While working with people from high and low cultures, the way to communicate is important. Being able to communicate properly with the person in front of you is not always easy, especially if the culture is different. A manager should make sure that, wherever your interlocutor is from, the message is clear and cannot be misunderstood or misinterpreted.

### **3. Culture and communication**

Culture and communication have a very complex relationship together; culture cannot exist without communication. It can be from passing along the cultural characteristics from generation to generation or, in this case, from one place/culture to another to share and preserve it.

#### ***A) The role of managers in a cultural environment***

On the local and international scales, the fact that cultural environment is one of the most important factors affecting organizations raises the significance of the management of cultural differences regarding language, religion, values, attitudes, education, politics and legislation. (Tutar, Altinoz, & Cakiroglu, 2014)

From the survey made for the purpose of this thesis and based of 100 people, many differences have been showed, as the fact that some people will shake hands to greet and some won't, others will tend to tell about their personal life and be very warm while some others will keep it professional and even be cold. Some people will feel more quickly offended than others when talking about certain topics. An example from the questionnaire is a respondent saying: *We work with Brazilians and they are very tactile, which makes me uncomfortable.* (Dieudonné, 2018) From one culture to another, the proximity between two colleagues can be different and, as the example shows, it can create an awkward situation for the other one. All these differences in the behavior regarding the greetings, the work ethics, the idea of work/private life balance, the attitude regarding following instructions, etc. has to be known beforehand to be able to deal with it quickly and in an efficient way.

If the differences are taught as important and are effectively managed, employees will get closer to each other and work better in teams. They will be more committed to their work place if they feel that someone is understanding their differences and want to know more about it. But before to manage a cultural team, the manager needs to develop a cultural intelligence, it means being able to interpret unfamiliar behaviors and pretend that it is from your own culture to understand it better and avoid judgements. Not all the managers have this intelligence, they might need a personal training beforehand to be aware of their own personal values. Besides this, a social training is required to perceive others' values advantages and understand how it can be a strength. A work training is also a plus to build a cultural intelligence as it will help to focus on the organizational success.

If a manager doesn't get a proper training, he might ignore the differences and behave only following its own culture norms which will be a disadvantage for the communication within the team. Some employees might feel rejected or not understood. However, to manage well cultural diversity is not easy. It not only needs

time, willingness, and action, but it also requires a positive, dynamic, and realistic strategy. (Rijamampianina, 1995)

### ***B) Cross-cultural communication and the new technologies***

The new technologies have opened many new marketplaces that allows the companies to promote their businesses to new geographic locations and cultures. Technologies allow us to work with people who are in another country, it's as easy to work with them than working face-to-face with someone who is in the same place as you. Business communication works faster and is easier but it also makes it more distracting and less clear. (Mindtools, s.d.)

Internet allows the employees to communicate with others by video, calls, e-mails, instant messaging, social networks,... everywhere in the world which make the communication between the two persons easier as it is instantaneous. You can work with someone online without having to meet him, the tasks and the deal can be accomplished faster. Nonetheless, instantaneous communication regarding quick decisions is sometimes better while you have a face-to-face meeting.

From constantly overhearing cell phone conversations, emailing,... communication tools that were designed to make people more productive can actually do the opposite. Instant communication make it harder for the employees to deal with one task at a time when they are is constantly interrupted by comments and questions about other projects or personal issues. (Morley, 2018) As well as social media and other communication tools can be a distraction at work. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, there are plenty of social networks to get lost in. These distractions can remove the employees attention from their work for a short period of time which interrupt the flow of their daily activity. Not only that it affects the employee's quality and consistency of their work, modern technologies can also affect their mood... These communication channels became part of the modern lifestyle, forbidding their use won't have a significant impact on the employees but the managers has to be strict and make sure that employees make an effort to sometimes turn off their communication devices as social media while they are working.

As mentionned previously, internet makes the communication easier but it's sometimes harder to communicate with the body language and truly get the emotions of the person who is behind the computer. It might be challenging to communicate effectively while you don't have the person in front of you but only behind a screen. Another problem which can appear is the time difference between the countries. Depending on where you are in the world, it might be complicated to schedule a meeting with someone who is in another continent with another time zone. In this case, the workers will have to compromise in order to find a meeting time which can fit to both of them.

From the managers side of view, technology make them often accessible in case if they have to react to an emergency, they can be alerted quickly, even when they are in vacation. This kind of situation is great for getting guidance from the managers during unexpected emergencies but it can also put a serious damper on their ability to take

breaks and recharge themselves so they can be more effective when they are on the job. Without the ability to disconnect from devices, the managers will suffer from stress which will limit their ability to adapt, innovate and effectively lead their teams. If they have to deal with a person of another culture, the manager might look rude or react inappropriately due to the stress and shock caused by being continuously connected. This situation doesn't only apply to the manager but to any of the employees. In order to avoid this situation, the manager should encourage the employees and give them the right to disconnect from work emails during non-working hours in order not to put too much pressure on them. In some countries, like England, employees have to respond to their clients or their peers, even during the week end or after their working hours. However, in Belgium for example, they have the right to disconnect while they are not working. By restricting work-related communications during non-work hours to only emergency situations, the employees are given a degree of autonomy from their workplace. During that period, they can focus on recuperation, it can help the worker to be more productive and reduce the burnout.

Employees have more access to information than ever before, if they want to learn something new they just have to search on Internet and find what they want. This might help them while they have to talk in a different language, they can use a translation program to help them to communicate properly with others. While interacting with someone else, if they don't know something about the culture, the beliefs and aren't feeling comfortable to ask, they can also find information on a search engine. New technologies will help foreigners to communicate and find information about the culture but also, they will be able to communicate with people from their own country.

### ***C) Cultural adequacy***

Ignoring the cultural differences between colleagues, pretending that everyone think the same way is the opposite of what a manager should do. They should considerate everyone's need and not only the needs of the dominant group. An effective management in an international company can be possible through a cultural adequacy. If it is effectively and successfully managed, managers should respect the opinions of the different groups and build an environment free of stereotypes and prejudices.

From Matveev and Miller point of view, intercultural adequacy requires three components: cultural knowledge, skills and personality orientation. For them, these components complement and support each other. (Tutar, Altinoz, & Cakiroglu, 2014)

The *cultural knowledge* is about knowing their own culture as individual and a general knowledge of a particular culture, for example the one of your co-workers. As mentioned previously, individuals must accept the differences between cultures. Be flexible and aware of misunderstandings will help to understand it better.

The *skills* is to use the appropriate attitude and behavior while being in an international environment. An essential characteristic for a manager is to be skilled, have good relations between employers and employees from different culture. Managers should

be able to understand and adapt themselves in any cultural environment while using an efficient communication skill.

The last component is the *personality orientation*. The managers should be able to try to put themselves into the shoes of others from another culture. To understand someone and be able to truly communicate, they have to be in the shoes of the individuals they work with. It's the manager's view of different cultures emerging through their emotional and physical reactions. (Tutar, Altinoz, & Cakiroglu, 2014)

## 4. Culture shock

This chapter will give an overview of the main aspects of Culture Shock, its causes and influential factors as well as the consequences and symptoms it can lead to. Finally, a section will also focus on possible solutions to the problem of culture shock and a conclusion. The information used in this chapter are inspired from Oberg's work.

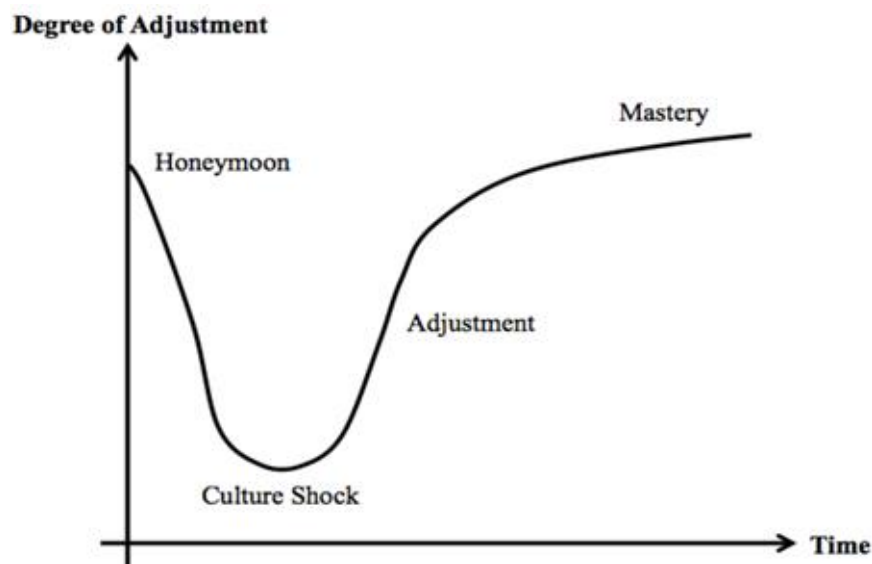
### A) Culture shock definition

According to the online Oxford dictionary, culture shock is *the feeling of disorientation experienced by someone when they are suddenly subjected to an unfamiliar culture, way of life, or set of attitudes* (Oxford dictionary, s.d.).

It can appear to tourists, exchange students, expatriates, migrants, refugees, sojourners, etc. Even if it varies significantly depending on which group you belong to, the culture shock can affect everybody. Due to restrictions of words, this work will mainly focus on people which are sent abroad for business and work.

### B) Oberg's four stages

Dr. Oberg developed a theory which includes four stages of the cross-cultural adjustment while traveling and/or working abroad. Even if individuals differ greatly in the degree in which culture shock affects them, these stages explain the range of emotions they may experience when adapting to a foreign culture. From excitement and interest to frustration, depression and fear of the unknown. As you showed in the picture below, these stages are important to understand how a culture shock is developed through time.



Picture 3: The four stages of cultural adjustment

#### i) The honey moon stage

As you can see on the graph, this stage is the first one according to Oberg. It last for a few days, weeks or a couple of months depending on everyone. The person is discovering the new environment and is fascinated by the new experience. During this stage the traveler will have a positive mind, will be curious about the new language, the food and the surrounding.

The honey-moon is mainly about idealizing the host culture, you still see the country as a visitor and not as someone who has to live there for a longer period and has to fit into this new culture. At this stage, the move seems like the best decision ever made. There is a feeling of excitement for the new adventure. As we are focusing on moving in a new culture for a business purpose, the new employee will be fascinated about discovering the colleagues, the new work environment, the position and tasks. Even if the stress about starting a new job will probably be present, the excitement about a new culture will, at this stage, be greater than any stress.

#### ii) Culture shock or hostility stage

This stage is the most important one and arrives when the foreign visitor remains abroad, when he finally has to cope with real conditions of life, the excitement from the honey moon stage slowly disappears. It's characterized by an aggressive and hostile attitude for the host country. The new comer starts to feel the differences between its own culture and the new one, it's confusing and not being aware of the local culture can be frustrating as it can lead to some conflicts or misunderstanding. Also, some symptoms like fatigue from not understanding the language, the gestures or the signs appears, and miscommunications might appear. (Oberg L. )

During this stage, the manager of the company and the work environment must be vigilant and prepare the new employee by warning him of the traditions and cultural faux-pas that may happen. If the foreigner is not aware of the cultural differences and does not handle it cautiously, then the culture shock can last for a longer period. The difference in the work environment can be found in the way people work or interact with each other, as we explained previously, depending on the culture some persons will prefer to talk clearly, and others will rather use insinuation which can create an uncomfortable situation and many misunderstanding. But it can also come from a language trouble due to the accent or a foreign language, transportation troubles, shopping troubles, ...

During this period, the foreigner will feel alone and rejected as the people in the host country are largely indifferent to all these troubles. Therefore, the manager has to help but also has to try to understand the concerns and the difficulties to adapt in this new culture otherwise, it can lead to many physical and psychological symptoms which might be hard to get rid of it. At this stage, if the persons overcome the cultural shock, they will stay in the country or in the company; if not, they might choose to leave before to reach the stage of a breakdown. (Oberg, 1960)

### iii) Adjustment's stage

The travelers can surpass the culture shock by getting familiar and comfortable with the culture, the surrounding, food and the language of their new environment. It's the beginning of the adjustment stage. They feel more relaxed and they are developing an objective view of their experience. Instead of criticizing all the differences and the difficulties they had to face, they might even joke about it. As the time is passing, the confidence gets bigger. The feeling of anxiety while going to work or walking around is disappearing. They are not only accepting the food, drinks, customs, habits and language, they begin to enjoy them.

### iv) The acceptance stage

The final stage of culture shock is the acceptance. It doesn't mean that everything is understood but at least, it is accepted enough to live in peace and without any anxiety or anymore symptoms. There is a new sense of belonging and sensitivity towards the host culture, it seems that now, they are part of it now. They are used to the differences and it even seems normal to act or talk the way they do. (Oberg, 1960)

## ***C) The importance of culture shock***

Cultural shock is known as a real sickness; it can affect you psychologically and physically as your mood, the way you will interact with people, etc. Besides the psychological symptoms, the shock can also have an impact on the foreigner's body, creating physical symptoms. Added to those arising from not knowing how to communicate properly and the strange customs, will cause frustrations and anxieties. A negative mind towards the new culture, as explained previously, can affect the outsider in many ways. But being frustrated or having an aggressive attitude with the host country and the co-workers will have an impact on the ability to get socially involved with them, either at work or in their personal life. The hostility towards the culture can be sensed and, in many cases, the person in front of them will also respond in a hostile manner or just try to avoid the foreigner which can cause a social break-down and a lack of communication at work. This kind of situation can lead to a reject to work with the other co-workers or to accomplish the work in an inefficient way. As they feel misunderstood and lonely in front of this new culture and people, the dependence on the fellow countrymen will increase until they adjust themselves to the new situation.

## ***D) Dealing with culture shock***

To get over culture shock as quick as possible, it is important to understand the other culture. To do so, knowing the common language, which is the principal symbol of communication will help to be integrated. It can also be frustrating to learn a new language, especially for adults; but knowing a friendly or basic conversation will help to break the ice and show that the person is ready to try to communicate. By using these basic things daily, the gain of confidence is rising, and it gets easier to make the first move with people around.

Joining the local activities and get involved into the community will help to be part of the new culture. As this part of the dissertation wants to show, one of the key factor of



the adjustment is not only the persons around you, it is also a state of mind. As an outsider, you will be treated as such if there isn't any effort from your own side to understand the culture. As Oberg said, *Understanding the ways of people is essential but this does not mean that you have to give up your own. What happens is that you have developed two patterns of behavior.* The first behavior is the one you grow up with, your own culture. The second one is the new one, the one you try to understand and fit in. Having another behavior regarding the culture doesn't mean that you shouldn't be yourself or forget your own culture. Both behaviors can cohabitate, there isn't one better than the other.

### ***E) Cultural shock conclusion***

Through the different steps of the cultural shock, Oberg explained that *the environment does not change. What has changed is your attitude towards it.* In this case, a manager can help his employees by making the integration easier through different way, as well as the other employees can help the culturally shocked colleague to adapt quicker by helping, being around and friendly, listen to them, ... As mentioned earlier, there are many ways to help a person during this process. The efforts must come from both side.

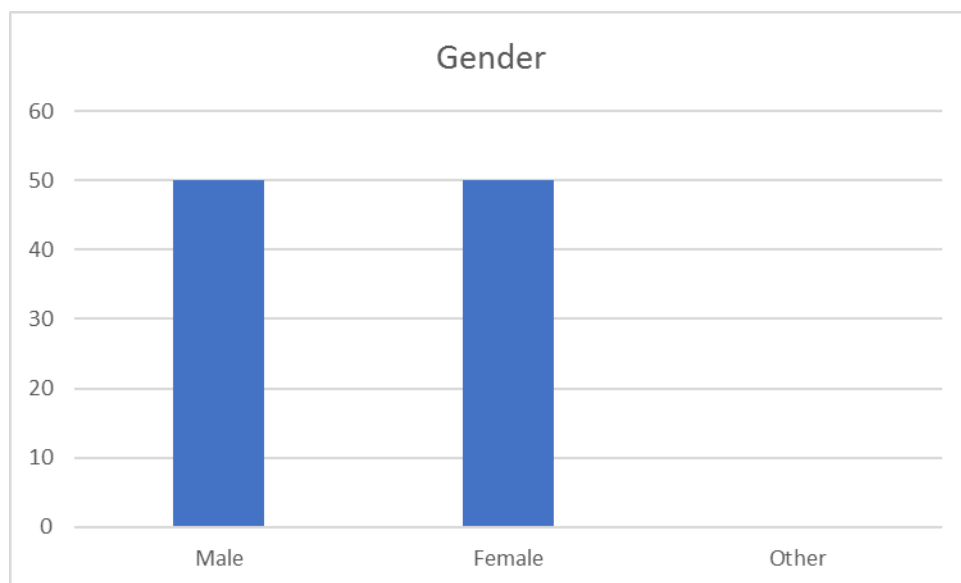
The success factors in cross-cultural adjustment still have literature gap to study. Oberg is giving both side, the life cycle as well as a brief explanation of how to deal with it, that it is also important to cohabited with the new culture and your own culture. But an alternative perspective to help the managers to prepare their employees needs to be find. This chapter, based on Oberg works is arguing that culture shock is not just about culture, it's also about the dynamics of context (n.b. relevant to the different frameworks discussed previously) and how individuals deal with life changes, how much effort are they ready to make to fit into the new society, how do they react with challenges. A cultural shock can only be avoided if everybody adds from its own contribution. This dissertation contributes to have an overview and a basic understanding of the factors influencing the success of relocation of employees or for employees from the company's country to deal with person who are not used to their culture.

## 5. Analyze of the survey

In this part of the dissertation, the question *What is cultural differences and what effect culture shock can have on communication management* will be discussed by analyzing the answer of the questionnaire. To analyze it, the use of descriptive research design to describe the relationships between different criteria is adopted. As well, quasi-experimental research design is used to identify the differences between the different groups of people in the survey. This part of the dissertation will help to understand some theoretical point discussed previously and understand how people working in a cultural environment deal with it and what are the day to day challenges.

A sample size of 100 persons was used for the purpose of this survey. Since the questionnaire was target on people working in a multicultural environment, only the participants who answer YES to the question *Do you have social interactions with people from different religions, cultures, ethnicities and/or sexual orientations at work?* were included in the sample of 100 and take part of the analyze, the others were in the limitation area and were rejected. The respondents had to answer fourteen different questions. The first few questions were about the demographic aspect, to understand who answered this questionnaire. The next ones are focusing on the cultural aspect. The types of questions used for the facility of the questionnaire are: discrete, rating scale and open end.

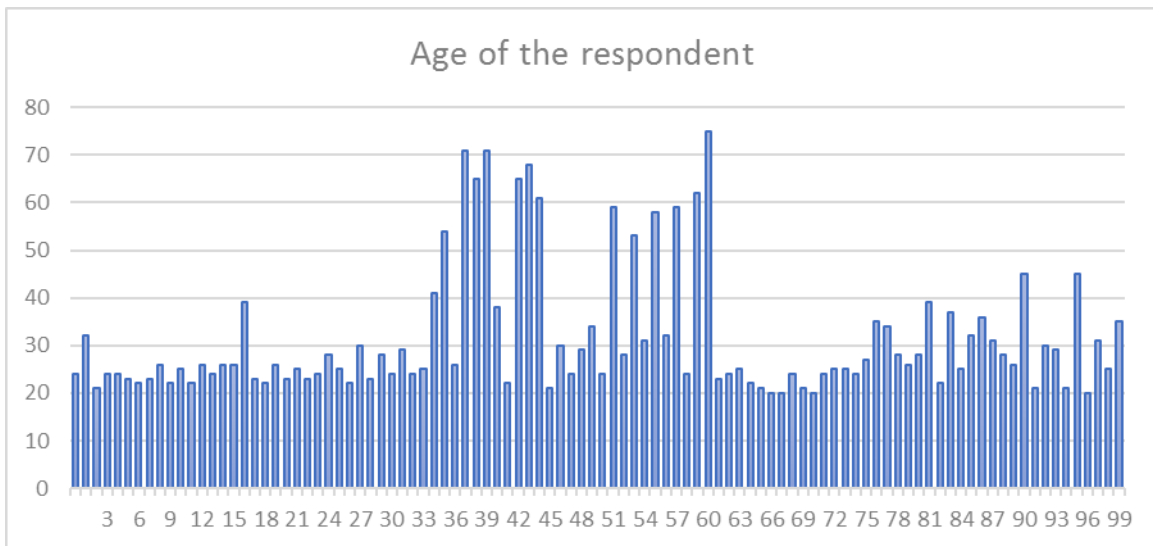
Graph 1: Gender of the respondents



The first question asked is about the gender of the participants. The graph shows that 50% of them were females and the other half males. Being a male or a female within an international company can also create problems and discrimination. The way cultures

see the place of the gender can differ from one to another. As an example, some respondents agreed to say that in some country, the gap between the wage of male and female is very unequal for the same position in a company. Sexism is also a problem, in fact, 21% of the girls said that they had to face sexism and/or machismo while being abroad. The way people sees woman at work can be different and, as some woman mentioned in the survey, they sometimes feel discriminated in many ways. A respondent said that as an engineer working abroad and mostly with males, it can sometimes be challenging to be taken seriously.

Graph 2: Graph of the age of the respondent



For the question about the age of the participants, the mean is 31,52. The minimum is 20 years old and the maximum is 75 years old as you can see on the graph. Which means that this survey was quite spread concerning the age, even if it's still oriented on people around their thirties. In the survey, many young people aged from 20 to 30 years old states that they can feel the cultural differences through the age. The respect of elder is seen differently from one culture to another has already discussed. A participant explained that *a manager in my company is 26 years old and hide his age to other employee because they will obey less to him if they discover that he his younger than them*. The age can be challenging, especially for a young manager, older employees might not obey, respect him or take him seriously.

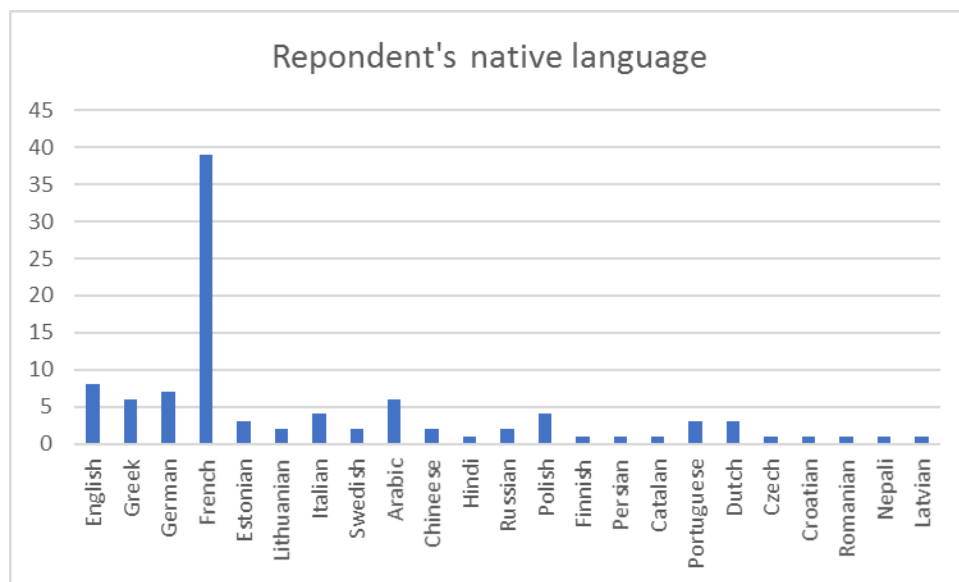
Table 1: Sexual orientation table.

	Heterosexual	Homosexual	Bisexual
Sexual orientation	91	4	5

About the question on the sexual orientation, as it this shown in the table, 9% of the respondents said that they were homosexual or bisexual. This question is also important regarding the cultural differences as some respondents mentioned on the survey,

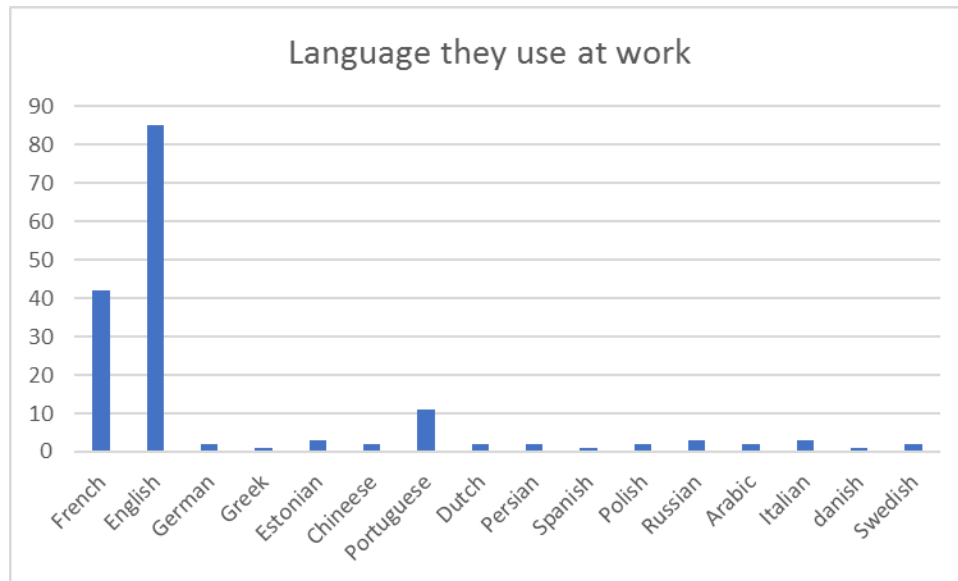
depending on the culture, not everybody is accepting the differences concerning the sexual orientation. A respondent answered that he has to deal with the stereotypes and prejudices that come with being a gay white male. Discrimination can occur in certain culture, they don't always accept the differences due to their religions, traditions or way of thinking. It can create an uncomfortable climate at work. The survey showed that these 9 employees had to face discrimination at work by people from other culture, it is sometimes not well considered. They also said that they have to hide it, which create a bad environment and stop them to be themselves at work. Some heterosexual respondent working abroad also explained that in their work place, they have a lot of declared homosexuals unlike in their country. The manager should be able to be faire with everybody, whatever their sexual orientation is and be careful that they don't get prejudices from their co-workers.

Graph 3: The respondent native language



The language barrier is a huge obstacle in the process of integration for a foreigner. For this purpose, the questionnaire first asked *What is the native language of each of the respondent?* As the graphs 2 shows in the horizontal axis, we can find 23 different languages that they use as a mother language.

Graph 4: Language the respondents use at work

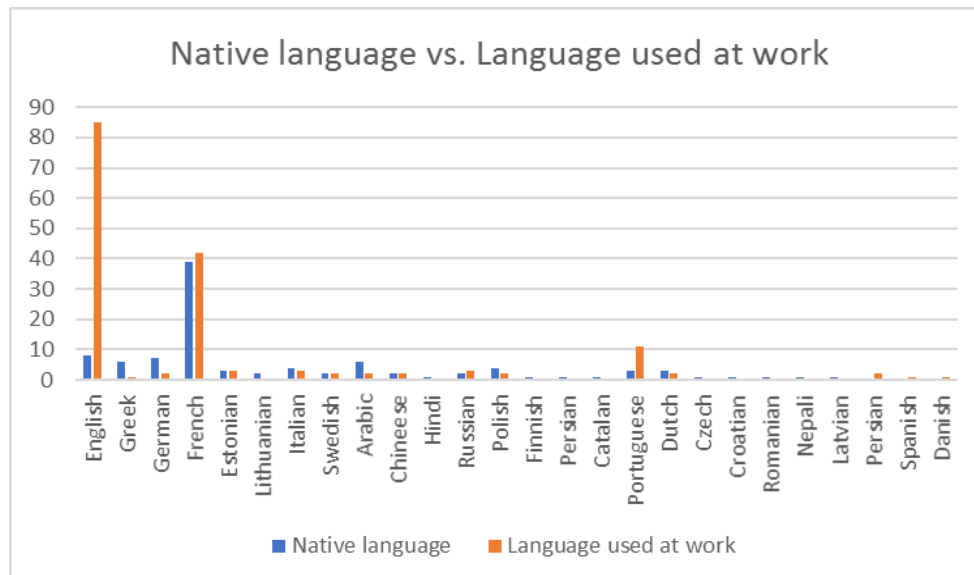


The fourth graph shows the language that the respondent uses at work (n.b. some persons use more than one language at work: see table below), from 23 languages we dropped to only 16 different languages. What does it mean?

Table 2: Native language and other language used at work

	Only use their native language at work	Use their native language + other language	Doesn't use their native language
%	14	41	45

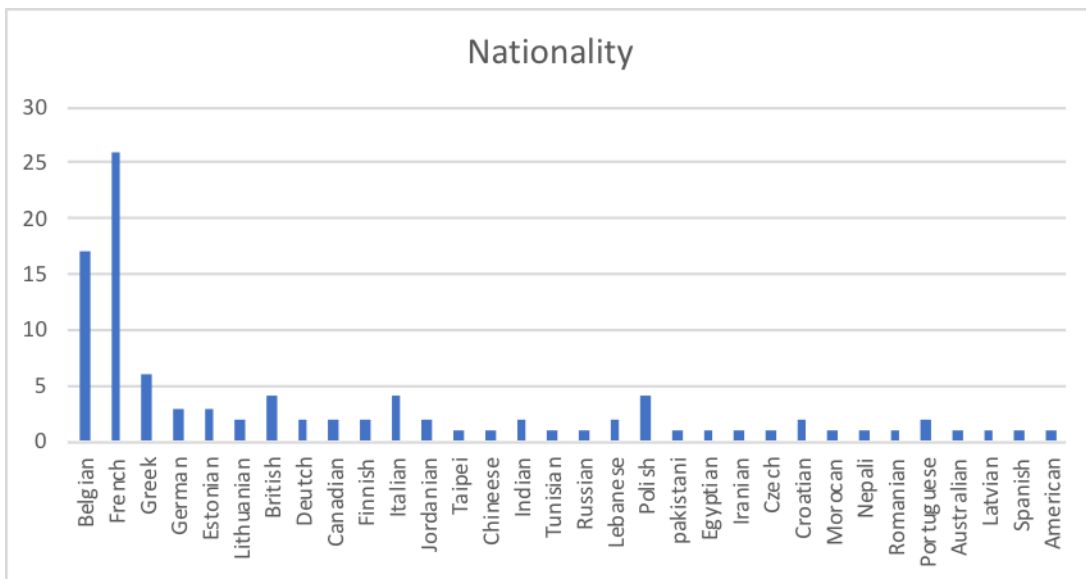
Graph 5: The native languages and the languages used at work, comparison of both



As the graph shows, many foreigners going to another country to work usually use English in the work environment or at least, they don't usually use their native language at work. In this case, 85 % of the respondents use English in their workplace. It means that it can be an issue when not everybody can speak the common language properly, it can lead to confusion, misunderstanding of the meaning, ... It can also create some situations as one of the respondent explained: *We are a lot of French speaking people in the team and sometimes we forget that there are non-French speaking people in the room. It makes it harder for them to take part in the conversation or to understand private jokes, which really create a gap between the cultures.* As the table shows, 41% of the participants use their native language plus at least one more language at work, 14% are using their native language and 45% of them use a language which is not their own. This means that most of the people use a language that isn't their own and they are either using high context or low context culture to communicate with others, this lack of knowledge in the language added with a different culture context doesn't help the foreigners to not make mistakes while communicating, things can easily be misinterpreted by others, native or not.

Employees, especially the one who doesn't speak the common language fluently or have a strong accent tend to stick together regarding the language. The manager should react directly and mix people as much as possible, to not regroup them depending on the culture or the language because after, when they get use to speak in French, for example, it's harder to mix them up and oblige them to speak the work place language.

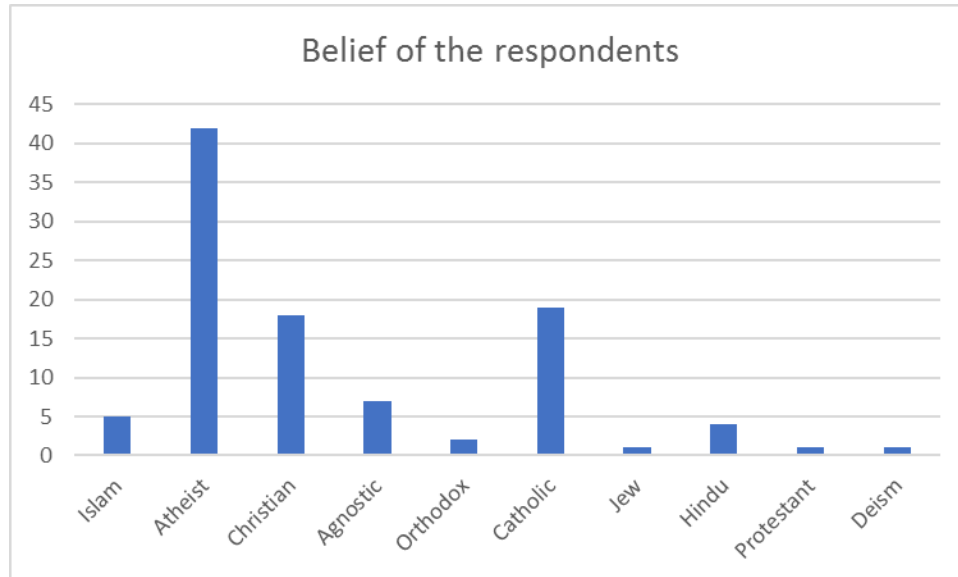
Graph 6: Graph of nationalities.



As the graph shows, multiple nationalities from all over the world answered this survey, which give us a good overview of the cultural differences. Each nationality has to face their own stereotypes, it can be true or wrong. Many participants complained about stereotypes and call it discrimination, people don't even try to understand or listen, they stick to the stereotypes they heard. For example, someone said that *At work, most*

*people think that Moroccans are all conservative and old fashion, which is not true. Sometimes people's judgement is based on ignorance.*

Graph 7: Graph about the religions and beliefs



Concerning the religion, has the graph shows, ten different types has been found in the sample of 100 responses. In a big multinational company, this number can increase. Has the answers from the survey shows, religion can have a big impact within a mixed company. For some employees, religion racism is the main discrimination they have to face, someone gave the example: *For a Christian living among Muslim, I am mostly facing very religious differences*. The main finding of the survey, from people having discrimination regarding their beliefs, is that the manager should impose a religion-free environment by not showing any religious objects). Depending on the country, religion take a different place in people's life, it's important to be open minded and do not judge the beliefs of each and every one. As the graph shows, Atheism, which the definition from the Oxford dictionary is *the disbelief or lack of belief in the existence of God or gods*, is dominating by 42%. A respondent whom is not atheist said: *I have to face neopaganism, genderism and general atheism dominating everyday life of co-workers*. Later on, comparing the different comments and the religion of them, one conclusion is highlighted: Atheist persons doesn't complain about religion or beliefs discrimination against them, in fact, several persons said that they never had this kind of problem before but noticed that their colleagues with other beliefs had to face discrimination. As the answers from the questionnaire demonstrated, many workers have to face discrimination for being part of a religion or for not being part of it. Different culture means different way of thinking, there isn't a good or wrong way, the managers should be able to understand that and do his best to avoid discrimination against someone's beliefs.

The eleventh question was about *On a scale from 0 to 10, how would you rate the work environment you are working in regarding the cultural differences (as stereotypes, rejections, language anxiety, misunderstanding, ...) 0 = there is no cultural shock 10 = there are plenty of cultural differences?* The mean found is 4.57. After this question, the main point of this survey is to understand what kind of cultural differences they have to face and what are their feelings towards these discriminations. So, the next question asked was: *Can you explain what kind of cultural differences or discrimination you have to face?* This question points out the differences and feelings the respondents have while working in a multicultural environment. Most of the answers were similar but depending on where they are from and where they work in, more differences were appearing. Racism was cited many times, a participant even points that in his work place *There are black people on my team and I can see that sometimes, our content (that we translate) is directed towards white people and don't include people of color enough.* The point of this testimony is to show that, even if we don't always see it, we do not always include all the culture at work, it can hurt other's feelings. Discrimination towards people with a different skin color appear in some cultural environment, someone mentioned that *By being an Arab, we are automatically labeled as outcasts* or even colleagues, not having to face any discrimination but seeing their peer facing it as this person who said *My co-workers from African origin are object of discrimination.* Many people also quoted that they had to face racism in their work place, not due to the color of their skin but also because they are from a specific country or they speak a specific language, due to the stereotypes or their religions. Some respondents cited they had to face *Racism against French people, We as Italians are sometimes badly perceived from Northern Europe people* or *I witnessed racism against Indians, ...* Racism takes place in many different way within a multicultural company. And as the survey demonstrates, it can be directed against you or your colleagues and create a bad working atmosphere.

For the question *What do you think your manager could do to improve communication and the relationship between people from different cultures in order to avoid conflicts, misunderstanding or cultural shock in your work place?* many participants point out the fact that the managers should give instructions and advices about the local culture and the way people live in the host country, this would help the new employees to understand better the local culture and the habits. As well, the most common answer to avoid conflict and cultural shock was about managing team building, workshops, weekly meetings and activities between the employees. This will help to integrate the new employees or even the current one and can help them to avoid certain of the culture shock symptoms or anticipate it. Another important point is about sharing its own experience, it can help other workers to understand and deal with daily problems. Linked with this, each culture should have the opportunity to present and share it. Employees can share their own culture with others by organizing a dinner, everybody can present the national food and share it in a nice environment or through a power point. This can also help to break the stereotypes. While having such activities, the manager has to be open to any discussion and keep an open mind, for example, while talking about religions or the cultural differences within the workspace.



Having a common language at work and only speak this one is very important within a work place. For example, if the language used at work is English, it's important to impose to everybody to speak in English all the time. As well, the managers have to be patient to deal with the language barrier, as it's not everybody's mother language, it can be hard sometimes to clearly explain the feelings or something work related. The managers should help and find solutions for the employees to improve the language skill and make sure that nobody is being apart because they have a lack of knowledge or because the other employees are using another language at work as it can lead to uncomfortable situations as many participants explained. The managers himself has to speak a good English as he is the one giving orders and dealing with different situations.

One of the main issue discussed by the respondent is about the lack of communication between a manager and the employees. In any company, communication is important to manage properly; in a multinational company, communication is even more important. Employees shouldn't be afraid to speak with their managers. As well, the manager should be able to listen and understand the different approaches and, even more important, give feedbacks and help when needed.

## Conclusion

Culture is used to describe the social relations and behaviors that characterize a society or a country and distinguish it from the others. If a manager doesn't pay attention to other's culture or only considers his or her own culture norms, the organization is meant to fail due to a lack of communication and understanding. The cultural difference's disadvantages for the manager are mainly the lack of communication, misunderstandings that can lead to conflicts and then poor performance at work. Some cultures might be stricter and reserved than others, what can be a joke for someone can be taboo for others. Understanding other's culture is important to avoid awkward situations. (Tutar, Altinoz, & Cakiroglu, 2014) *Cultures are subjective. There is a tendency to assume that the elements of one's own cultures are logical and make good sense. It follows that if other cultures—whether of relationships, groups, organizations, or societies—look different, those differences are often considered to be negative, illogical, and sometimes nonsensical.* (Encyclopedia.com, 2018)

As mentioned previously, cultural differences make the communication between the manager and the team difficult, there are several management and planning aspects that are culturally constrained. At the same time, it makes the work more interesting, you must always be ready to face new challenges and learn new things about the others. Managers start to view some points that often were unnoticed being questioned, it's a day by day challenge. Managers should be sensitive to the local cultural differences in the country they operate while at the same time they need integrated strategies applicable all over the world. Besides this, other advantages are a wide range of opinion, as from other culture, everyone as a different way to see things which increases the creativity of the team. Being a multicultural company improve the tolerance of the persons around, not only at work but also personally. It gives another view of the world. (Tutar, Altinoz, & Cakiroglu, 2014)

To understand better how cultural differences affect the managers and the communication between them and the employees, as well as the positive and negative aspect of cultural differences is important not only theoretically in terms of filling the existing gaps in the literature, but also for the practice of international and global business: for the well being of the employees and for the company itself.

Considering Oberg's work about cultural shock and by analyzing the survey on a small sample size, today's business world have a better understanding and adaptation skill to other culture than previously. Culture shock still exist but people deal with it in a more efficient way than before. Even if cultural differences are still present, as well as discrimination, we could admit that nowadays, the societies are more open to changes and to meet new cultures. As said previously, the world is evolving really fast and some cultures are getting closer to each other due to political, language, religion or other matters and cultural shock is less present than it used to be.

As the survey also shows, cultural differences are real and even if the managers try their best to avoid conflicts, tension and cultural mistakes, it's not always easy to deal with it. After analyzing the work of Hofstede, Peltó and Hall, it's now possible to place a culture into a category, understand and compare it with other culture. The remaining gap is to know what to do with these differences, how to deal with it within a company.

After analyzing the work of anthropologist and analyzing data, the question remaining is: Even if we do understand the cultural differences, its criteria and the cultural shock that can lead from it, what is the best option for a manager? Should they treat everybody in the same way and be culturally free/neutral at work or should they try to adapt themselves to the various cultural differences to show interest and try to understand it? As this question is hard to have a proper answer and anthropologists are still discussing about it, the best way to deal with it is to be fair with each and everyone, show interest in everybody's culture by having cultural meetings but have only one rule, the same one for everyone. The manager shouldn't have to adapt completely to each culture, everybody should adapt to the work's culture. Even if, in some cases, avoiding culture is impossible, a new way to deal with it should be implemented and analyzed.

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Picture 1: Maslow's pyramid

[https://www.google.pt/search?rlz=1C1PRFC\\_enPT819PT819&tbm=isch&sa=1&ei=HH7tW8TkPISegAbiqbvYCA&btnG=Rechercher&q=Maslow+pyramid+of+needs#imgrc=YekJpXlxRIRUuM](https://www.google.pt/search?rlz=1C1PRFC_enPT819PT819&tbm=isch&sa=1&ei=HH7tW8TkPISegAbiqbvYCA&btnG=Rechercher&q=Maslow+pyramid+of+needs#imgrc=YekJpXlxRIRUuM)

Picture 2: High and low context culture scale

<https://online.seu.edu/high-and-low-context-cultures/>

Picture 3: The four stages of cross cultural adjustment

[https://www.google.be/url?sa=i&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwiU36T7p43eAhUuMewKHSTPDr8QjRx6BAGBEAU&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.researchgate.net%2Ffigure%2FThe-four-Stages-of-Cross-Cultural-Adjustment\\_fig5\\_310604425&psig=AOvVaw3uGCsXHLG4lO2OE1WeRxmx&ust=1539860079986003](https://www.google.be/url?sa=i&source=images&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwiU36T7p43eAhUuMewKHSTPDr8QjRx6BAGBEAU&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.researchgate.net%2Ffigure%2FThe-four-Stages-of-Cross-Cultural-Adjustment_fig5_310604425&psig=AOvVaw3uGCsXHLG4lO2OE1WeRxmx&ust=1539860079986003)